

Contributions

LODGEIANITY

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One of satan's best methods of combating the truth is by counterfeiting the truth. And nothing is more frequently counterfeited to-day than Christianity. And not the least dangerous among these is a counterfeit we may term, lodgeianity. Thousands of men are ignoring the church to-day, and not only the church but the Christ, because they are deceived by the lodge. It is very common to hear some one say, "My lodge is as good as your church. We take the Bible," etc. Yea, yea! It may be, brother, for churchianity is not a whit better than lodgeianity. Salvation can be found in neither. Salvation is of the Christ of the cross, neither is there salvation in any other. This the lodge, as a lodge, entirely ignores. I speak as one who knows. Among the forces that foster selfishness today, few are more powerful than the secret society. And the very selfishness of it, the devil has made many to receive as an all sufficient religion!

I was impressed some time ago, by the words of a somewhat prominent lodge man, who seemed to feel that the lodge was as Christ-like as the church. He cited me to a degree in his lodge which he was pleased to term, "The Good Samaritan Degree." He said that his lodge strongly impressed the great truth of this parable on each of its members, with the injunction, "Go, and do thou likewise." And, "was not this the way Christ pointed the man who sought eternal life?" True! true! Go and do likewise and thou shalt have eternal life. But let us briefly examine this parable.

A certain man fell among thieves, who robbed him, wounded him, and left him by the wayside to die. There came down a certain priest that way. He looked upon him. "Ah!" said he, "it's some poor heathen dying. Now if he were only of my nation, he would not be left to perish here. Too bad for him!" And so he passed by on the other side. And by chance, there came down that way, a certain Levite, and saw him there. "Well!" said he, "here's some poor foreigner fallen among thieves. It's too bad! Now if only he were a Jew, I should minister unto him. He ought to have been circumcised, and to have joined my sect." And so, he passed him by. And there came also, a certain Samaritan along that way. He saw him there, "sick and wounded, and ready to die." "Ah!" cried he, "and who is this? Some poor fellow in need, I see! Who is he? It matters not! I'll help him." He stoops and lifts the stranger into his own saddle, takes him to an inn, and there makes provision for him until he gets well. This man was commended by Christ, while upon the priests and Levites he poured forth his most scathing rebukes,—"Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! How shall ye escape the damnation of hell."

Now, let me tell you what I have seen. I have seen a certain man fall among thieves, who robbed him, wounded him, and left him to die in his hovel. There came down a certain lodge-priest that way. He looked upon him. "Ah!" said he, "it's some poor non-lodge fellow dying. Now, if he were only an Odd Fellow, with his dues paid up, he would not be left to perish here. Too bad for him!" And so he passed by on the other side. And by chance there came down that way a certain most-worshipful master-of-ceremonies, and saw him there. "Well!" said he, "here is some poor non-Mason fallen among thieves. Now, if he were only a Mason I should minister unto him. He ought to have been initiated, and to have become a member of my kind, and he would not be left languishing there." And he passed him by. What think ye? Is not this modern lodgeianity only the old time Priestianity and Levitianity? No, no! The secret societies are not making Good Samaritans out of men, and their much boasted charity is mostly "in the air."

To a true Christian, there is neither party, sect, nor kin; there is neither race, state, nor color. He is not even a patriot, for he knows neither Jew nor Greek, neither American nor Russian. To him, One is our Father, all else are brethren. Not brothers in name, but in deed and in truth. Any sect or fashion that teaches men, or leads them to act otherwise is not of Christ, and under condemnation.

Again, Christ taught that the love that is of God, is the love that gives, expecting absolutely nothing in return. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee." Luke 14:12-14. This is not the religion of the lodges. Men do not go into them for that purpose. They are founded upon the principle of "You help me out, and I'll help you out." This is utter selfishness. It may be business, but it is not religion.

You have heard the story of the two men who were farmers. One year the wheat crop was quite short. Farmer John said to himself one day, "Now, there is my neighbor James with a very small crop of wheat, and quite a large crop of boys and girls. Now, I have no family of children to feed, so I will help him out with some of my wheat. So that night he carried many bundles of his wheat and shocked them in the field of his neighbor James. But that same day, the other farmer said, "Now, there is my neighbor John. His wheat crop is so very light, and poor man! he has no children to help him earn his daily bread, really, I am thinking I ought to give him some of my wheat." So that selfsame night, he carried bundles of wheat and shocked them in the field of his

neighbor John. Next day, of course, they could not see that they had really given any away. So under cover of night each again went forth with more sheaves to carry to the other's field. By chance, they met, each with his burden, midway between the fields. They understood. There they dropped their bundles, on the very spot they met, and erected a temple as on the one spot on earth nearest heaven.

Find the life most complete in unselfish thoughts and actions, and thou wilt find the life nearest God. Show me the spot where was done the most unselfish deed, and I will show you the spot nearest God, and most worthy of His temple. Unselfishness is the essence of holiness.

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THE PRESBYTERIAN ASSEMBLY

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The Presbyterian Assembly of the United States has been in session all this week, in this city.

The Assembly is probably the most important religious body that meets anywhere upon the face of the earth. I have no inclination to belittle any other religious denomination, nor to especially exalt the Presbyterian church, but from my limited reading and observation I am led to believe that she has been the most potent factor of all the great denominations in the nineteenth century progress and aggression, in home and foreign work; in religion and civilization.

Every popular movement is supported by the Presbyterian church, or perhaps more correctly stated, the Presbyterian church has popularized every great movement during the last fifty years. The Young Men's Christian Association is not a Presbyterian institution, but who as influential in its establishment and development as prominent Presbyterians; the same is true of the Y. P. S. C. E., of the International S. S. Lessons, and County, State, National and International Sunday School Organization.

Again the Presbyterian church has been a most potent agency in the development of a spirit of religious, or church unity; because of these and many other unmentioned facts her annual assemblies are always occasions of not only national, but inter-national interest and importance.

The assembly of this year is of unusual importance because it has to deal with the great question of creed revision, or a new declaration.

At last year's assembly at St. Louis there was a committee of fifteen appointed to make some recommendations to this year's assembly; that committee reported both a majority and a minority report, the majority favored by thirteen members, the minority by two. The first motion was to dismiss, or reject both reports and thus ignore the question; several days were consumed on the discussion of this motion, which was then rejected by a large majority, consequently revision is now